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- Today's Insider (PDF)



YOU DON'T SAY...

"They're like, 'Did he forget to wear his socks? Did he forget to pack socks? Doesn't he realize it's cold outside?'"

Sen. Michael Lee, R-New Hanover, on his dislike of wearing socks.

WILMINGTON STAR-NEWS, 2/07/18

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News Summary

Basketball Diplomacy

Resources: [Lewis Letter](#)

With another legal battle brewing over the state's elections board, Rep. David Lewis tried a different approach Wednesday in a letter to Gov. Roy Cooper: Basketball diplomacy. Cooper has indicated he plans to take legal action against the latest legislation setting the membership of the elections board, but Lewis, R-Harnett and chairman of the House elections committee, suggested the disagreement should be settled outside of the courtroom.

"I ask that rather than continue this seemingly endless litigation, you allow House Bill 90 to take effect, and work with the General Assembly to address any of your remaining concerns," Lewis wrote, suggesting an unusual venue for discussions: This week's ACC basketball tournament. "If you desire further changes to the merged entity, I encourage you to engage with this General Assembly. In fact, I believe we are both attending the ACC tournament in New York City for the next few days, and would invite you to discuss these issues with me while we cheer together for North Carolina's teams. We've all recently come together to defend our state's barbecue against Brooklyn impostaers -- maybe bipartisanship will break out while UNC, NC State, and Duke show New Yorkers how college basketball is done as well."

Lewis noted that the continued legal wrangling has left the state without an elections board, and 25 county boards are now unable to take action on early voting and other matters because they only have two remaining members. State elections board staffers are asking the courts to restore a temporary order allowing action by two-member boards, but no action has been taken yet. "My home county of Harnett is unable to set an early voting schedule for the upcoming election due to the lack of a State Board, and other counties are experiencing even more serious issues," Lewis said in the letter to Cooper. "Your actions have sown chaos and confusion, despite the fact that you have indicated that you will allow House Bill 90 to take effect in one week."

Cooper and his attorneys argue that the N.C. Supreme Court's recent ruling should completely strike down a 2017 law merging the state's ethics and elections boards, a move that would restore the old system in which a five-member elections board has a majority of its members from the governor's party. Cooper's office did not issue a public response to Lewis' letter on Wednesday. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 3/08/18)

Pipeline Deal

North Carolina legislators might try to force Gov. Roy Cooper or his top aides to testify under oath about a controversial agreement his administration negotiated with the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. Sen. Bill Rabon, R-Brunswick, who leads the powerful Senate Rules Committee, said Wednesday that he wants a joint committee of the state Senate and House of Representatives to hold a formal hearing to compel Cooper to answer questions about the deal. The committee, Rabon noted, would have the power to subpoena records or people to provide testimony.

Cooper, a Democrat, has repeatedly denied that he or his staff did anything wrong regarding the pipeline. That includes the approval of a key environmental permit on the same day it was announced that the companies backing the pipeline had agreed to pay the state nearly \$58 million. The money was supposed to be spent on renewable energy projects and other environmental "mitigation" measures and to make sure Eastern North Carolina has access to natural gas from the pipeline. And after Rabon's announcement Wednesday, Cooper's chief of staff Kristi Jones released a statement saying the legislature's actions could harm the state's economy by putting the \$58 million fund at risk. "Sacrificing jobs in order to manufacture a partisan power grab is a new low and

legislators will have to answer to the people of eastern North Carolina," she said. "We look forward to discussing this further."

A conservative think tank in Raleigh, the Civitas Institute, has filed an ethics complaint against Cooper regarding the fund. Rabon mentioned that complaint in his statement calling for the hearing and also said that Cooper's office hasn't been properly transparent with his fellow state leaders. "We just want Gov. Cooper to answer the simple questions we asked -- the questions his lobbyist promised me he'd get answers to," Rabon wrote in an email. "If he would do that, there would be no need for a legislative hearing."

Democrats in the legislature previously criticized Rabon and others for a questioning that they termed an "ambush" of the lobbyist Rabon referred to -- a newly hired aide named Lee Lilley who lobbied on behalf of the pipeline in Congress before being hired by Cooper. Cooper's administration has provided WRAL with early drafts of the pipeline fund agreement. That's something Republicans asked for and haven't received, the station recently reported. "It is outrageous that the Cooper administration was selectively providing public records related to the governor's pipeline scandal to a single news outlet while refusing to provide the same records to the legislature," Rabon said in a statement. (Will Doran, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 3/07/18)

Notable House Primaries

While nearly all of this year's House races have candidates from multiple parties, far fewer will have contested primaries. Of those, some are open seats and others feature controversial incumbents facing opposition from inside their party. Here's a look at which House primaries will be worth watching:

District 1: With Rep. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, vacating the seat to run for Senate, this Republican-leaning district will have some competition in the GOP primary. Eddy Goodwin, a former state ferry director and former Chowan County commissioner, will face Candice "CV" Hunter of Hertford, owner of a marketing business who was previously a TV news reporter in Ohio and once held the title of Miss Currituck.

District 3: Republican Eric Queen is challenging Rep. Michael Speciale, R-Craven -- which will mean two Marine Corps veterans will face off in the GOP primary. Queen, who received a Bronze Star for his service in Afghanistan, lives in New Bern after retiring as a military police services chief stationed at Cherry Point. Speciale is one of the House's most conservative members and is known for controversial statements, including his vocal support last year for Alabama's Roy Moore. Queen's campaign materials don't mention much about the incumbent, but he said in a tweet that "new blood (is) needed for both parties that will work together."

District 6: First-term Rep. Beverly Boswell, R-Dare, is getting an unexpected primary challenge from Currituck County Commissioners Chairman Bobby Hanig. Currituck hasn't had one of its residents in the legislature since 1965, according to an Outer Banks Voice article, and Hanig says the county "has earned the right to be at the table." He hasn't said much about Boswell so far, but she's ruffled feathers in some Outer Banks communities for backing the repeal of the plastic bag ban.

District 7: Rep. Bobbie Richardson, D-Franklin, is running for another term, but her redrawn district leans Republican and has resulted in two prominent GOP leaders facing off in a primary for a shot at unseating her. One of them is former Rep. Glen Bradley of Youngsville, who served a single House term in 2011-2012 and was best known for proposing that North Carolina issue its own currency. His primary opponent is Nash County Commissioner Lisa Barnes.

District 8: This seat is open after Rep. Susan Martin, R-Wilson, decided not to seek another term after the district was redrawn. The new District 8, including only Pitt County, favors Democrats, and three of them will face off in the primary: Former U.S. Senate candidate Ernest Reeves of Greenville, Greenville City Councilwoman (and former mayor) Kandie Smith and Pitt County Board of Education Chairwoman (and former Greenville councilwoman) Mildred Atkinson Council.

District 11: A few weeks ago, this district wasn't expected to produce a competitive primary. But Rep. Duane Hall, D-Wake, is resisting calls to step down amid sexual harassment allegations, and that could give his two Democratic opponents a stronger shot in the primary. Hall's primary challengers are Allison Dahle of Raleigh and Heather Metour of Cary. Both filed to run on the same day allegations against Hall surfaced. If Hall drops out, his name would remain on the ballot, meaning the Wake County Democratic Party would choose a replacement if then won the primary after withdrawing.

District 17: Brunswick County Commissioner Pat Sykes is making a primary challenge against Rep. Frank Iler, R-Brunswick. Sykes cited Iler's role in local tax legislation and unfunded mandates such as the elementary class size change as her reasons for running.

District 79: The redrawn District 79 is an open seat that favors Republicans, and two well-known names in Beaufort County will face off in the primary. Keith Kidwell has served in GOP leadership roles at the county and congressional district level, and he was a delegate to the Republican National Committee in 2016. He has backing from Sen. Bill Cook, R-Beaufort. His GOP opponent, Jim Chesnutt, is the longtime CEO of Washington, N.C.-based National Spinning Company and has served as chairman of the Beaufort County Committee of 100.

District 80: Rep. Sam Watford, R-Davidson, is vacating his seat to run for Senate. Former Rep. Roger Younts, R-Davidson, is facing Davidson County Commissioner Steve Jarvis in the primary.

District 83: Rep. Larry Pittman, R-Cabarrus, has attracted a number of challengers from both parties, in part because of his controversial statements, which have included a comparison of Abraham Lincoln to Adolf Hitler. Because the district leans Republican, GOP primary candidate Michael Anderson could be in the best position for unseating him. Anderson, who was recently a contestant on the TV show "Relative Race," has been critical of Pittman's comments on Facebook. "THIS Reckless and dangerous rhetoric is totally out of line," he wrote.

District 99: Rep. Rodney Moore, D-Mecklenburg, could be vulnerable to criticism this year because he's failed to respond to repeated requests from state elections officials for his bank records in a probe of more than \$10,000 in unreported campaign contributions. He faces Democratic opposition from former Charlotte City Councilman Nasif Majeed, as well as former city council candidate Priscilla Johnson and Jackson Pethal, a Charlotte minister.

District 101: Rep. Beverly Earle, D-Mecklenburg, is retiring from the legislature and four Democrats are seeking to replace her in the left-leaning district: Carolyn Logan, Chance Harris, Gregory Miller and Lucille Puckett. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 3/08/18)

Unemployment Insurance

Resources: [DES Legislative Request](#)

Key lawmakers on unemployment insurance issues indicated Wednesday that they're not interested in beefing up jobless benefits. The comments came after a report last month found that unemployed people in North Carolina receive some of the lowest unemployment benefit payments in the country and receive payments for a shorter time than in nearly every other state.

"It's the opinion that we should stay the course of where we are and continue to build toward our trust fund," said Rep. Julia Howard, R-Davie and chair of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Unemployment Insurance. Though it had a \$2 billion deficit during the latest recession, that fund has recovered and had \$3.17 billion in the bank as of December. State officials estimate the fund could hit \$4 billion by 2020.

On Wednesday, the committee heard data about a hypothetical scenario: If jobless benefits were restored to the pre-2013 levels, how much money would the fund need to weather another recession

similar to 2008? A \$4 billion balance would be needed to avoid borrowing from the federal government, a Division of Employment Security official told legislators. Under the current law governing benefits, the required fund amount is difficult to determine but "would be less than the current \$3 billion balance by quite a bit." Rep. Dana Bumgardner, R-Gaston, said he doesn't want to risk another deficit in the fund. "I don't want anything to alter in a negative way where we're at now," he said. "Nobody in this state wants to go back to where we were."

Also during Wednesday's meeting, Lockhart Taylor, head of the Division of Employment Security, presented the agency's legislative agenda items for this year. The agency wants to lower the number of weekly employer contacts that benefit recipients are required to make. The current number is five, and DES wants to require three contacts to match federal rules and reduce the agency's workload.

Another proposed change would increase the number of employers required to file their quarterly tax and wage reports electronically. Current law requires electronic filing for businesses with 25 or more employees; the change would expand the rule to businesses with 10 or more employees -- affecting 25,000 businesses. Some legislators on the committee questioned if that would burden employers and suggested a hardship waiver provision, but Sen. Andy Wells, R-Catawba, suggested the state should go further. "Is there a point in the future where we go electronically completely?" he asked. "This makes no sense for the state of North Carolina, the taxpayers or the business community to continue doing paper." Taylor said he'll create a formal draft of the proposed legislation, and Howard said the committee plans to vote on it during the next meeting April 4. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 3/08/18)

Resignation Calls

In an effort to build pressure on a North Carolina lawmaker who has been asked to resign amid misconduct allegations, the youth arm of the state Democratic Party is calling his campaign donors and asking them to give to a women's advocacy group. Young Democrats of North Carolina on Wednesday launched a campaign to raise money for NC Women United, a liberal-leaning group that advocates for public policies and laws relating to women's health and social equality. The Young Democrats were among the first groups to call for Democratic state Rep. Duane Hall, D-Wake, to resign after a woman, two men and four anonymous sources quoted by NC Policy Watch accused Hall of sexual misconduct last week. Gov. Roy Cooper, the state Democratic Party and state Rep. Darren Jackson, the House minority leader, have called on Hall to resign.

Hall denies the allegations and has accused Policy Watch and its parent organization, the NC Justice Center, of having ulterior motives for publishing the allegations against him. Hall previously dated a woman who works at the Justice Center, which Policy Watch didn't publicly disclose upon publishing its initial story. Ebony West, the first black woman elected as president of the Young Democrats, said the group wants to ensure that the party is a leader in speaking out against sexual harassment. "We're in the midst of a time where women and other individuals have reclaimed the narrative around sexual assault and harassment and are telling their stories," West said. "Young Dems want to elevate these voices and narratives long gone untold or ignored, hold those accountable who have perpetrated toxic pervasive behaviors, and change our culture and systems."

Young Dems spokeswoman Khaetlyn Grindell said the group "will be calling every single donor" to ask that they match what they gave to Hall with a donation to NC Women United.

Rep. Carla Cunningham, D-Mecklenburg, added her name to the group of legislators calling on Hall to resign. Cunningham said sexual harassment has no place in the workforce. Another Mecklenburg Democrat, Chaz Beasley, doubled down on his previous statement about Hall. Beasley said it's wrong for Hall "to accuse people who are concerned about his behavior of being 'far left' or misinformed," he said in a phone interview, referencing a statement Hall released Tuesday. "The best thing he can do is listen to the people who work with him and know him," Beasley said.

Among Hall's top donors are Chris Corchiani, a former N.C. State basketball player; Stephen Malik, owner of the North Carolina FC soccer club who's trying to bring an MLS franchise to the Triangle;

and Greg Hatem, founder of Empire Eats. In recent months but before the accusations against Hall emerged, Corchiani donated \$1,000 to Hall, Malik donated \$3,000 and Hatem donated \$5,200. Malik released a statement through an NCFC spokesman saying he isn't withdrawing support for Hall, at least for now. "I have a public record for supporting and investing in opportunities and equality for women, a cause for which I've demonstrated strong commitment," Malik said. "Duane is a personal friend and while these allegations are disturbing I'm going to let due process take its course before evaluating support for him."

The legislature's Joint Legislative Democratic Women's Caucus issued a statement Wednesday. The lawmakers in the caucus called for:

- Immediate mandatory ethics training for General Assembly members and staff focused on sexual harassment, abuse, misconduct, gender bias and other forms of discrimination.
- Adoption of an "effective zero-tolerance policy" for sexual harassment, misconduct and discrimination.
- Formation of a system to report incidents of improper or unethical conduct to an independent, neutral third party.

The caucus asked that General Assembly leadership form a committee as soon as possible to implement the policy changes. Ethics training already is required for freshman members of the General Assembly. There is no third-party reporting system. "These acts should never be tolerated and always confronted," the lawmakers' statement says. "We, the Democratic Women of the North Carolina General Assembly, are committed to confronting the issue today." (Paul A. Specht, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 3/07/18)

Courts Commission

Months before Rep. Duane Hall, D-Wake, was accused of sexual harassment, Gov. Roy Cooper appointed him to be chair of the N.C. Courts Commission. Now Cooper -- who called for Hall to resign from the House shortly after the allegations were made public -- says Hall should step down from the commission as well. Hall has refused to resign and has said he's not guilty of sexual harassment, although he has admitted to kissing someone inappropriately.

"The governor has called for him to step down from the legislature and does not believe he should continue to serve on the commission," Cooper spokesman Ford Porter said Wednesday in response to an inquiry from the Insider. "We are continuing to review all options." Hall's Oct. 18, 2017, appointment letter from Cooper says Hall's term will last "until your successor is appointed;" the state law creating the Courts Commission gives the chair a two-year term. The law does not list a mechanism for removing commission members from office. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 3/08/18)

Safety Committee

The new House Select Committee on School Safety -- formed in the wake of the Florida school shooting -- has scheduled its first meeting for 9 a.m. Wednesday, March 21 in Room 643 of the Legislative Office Building. House leaders said in a news release that the meeting will last much of the day and include a lunch break.

The news release included a joint statement from the committee chairs outlining the agenda. "This committee's proactive process will produce a valuable resource for North Carolina citizens, educators and law enforcement," said the statement, attributed to Rep. David Lewis, R-Harnett, and Rep. John Torbett, R-Gaston. "We hope the committee record can serve as a centralized and comprehensive overview of school safety in our state. Our first mission is to provide data, reports and expert input from state and local officials who are trained and experienced in school safety to the committee members. Next, we can consider new policy recommendations, hear innovative ideas and review which current procedures are effectively protecting students and educators." (THE INSIDER, 3/08/18)

Drilling Plan

Facing mounting pressure from fellow Republicans who see little constituent support for drilling off the Atlantic coast, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke could be backpedaling on the Trump administration's initial plans to expand the program, GOP lawmakers told McClatchy. In a meeting with affected coastal GOP representatives last week, Zinke reaffirmed an exemption from the drilling for Florida, hinted to New Jersey officials their state was likely to be spared and left a Virginia congressman optimistic the policy would be overturned for his state, too. And Zinke said he'd travel to South Carolina to get a better sense of their concerns as well. If Zinke carves out exceptions for all these states, the idea of cross-Atlantic oil drilling basis could be dead.

The new policy had seemed clear in early January, when Zinke, at the White House's behest, said he would expand drilling all along the Atlantic. Then he gave an exemption to Florida, and other states -- many of which have Republican-dominated congressional delegations -- began demanding similar treatment. Seeking to clean up a bureaucratic mess, Zinke has since been visiting Capitol Hill and speaking with governors who want carve-outs. Following a Feb. 27 meeting, Zinke convened on Capitol Hill with East Coast Republican representatives, Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said her boss was "happy to meet with coastal representatives to discuss the offshore plan."

But Zinke is leaving confusion in his wake. Lawmakers from Florida emerged from that recent meeting convinced they were still going to get their exemption, citing a united delegation and a longstanding federal moratorium on drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. New Jersey Republicans said Zinke, a former Montana congressman, strongly implied their coast would be spared, too, because some studies suggested drilling there would not yield much oil. Rep. Scott Taylor, R-Va., said he was confident his state would get an exemption because of tourism and the Navy's concerns about drilling near a military base. And Rep. Tom Rice, R-S.C., said he was encouraged both by Zinke's promise to visit the South Carolina coast and his indication "to me that strong resistance (inside the state) will certainly be taken into account." Rep. Mark Sanford, R-S.C., another coastal representative and drilling opponent, said every Republican at the Feb. 27 meeting expressed similar sentiments. "There was a fairly consistent refrain with regard to hypothetical environmental impacts, tourism impacts and 'wait a minute, our coast is unique too,'" Sanford recalled.

Zinke even said at a recent meeting with Gov. Roy Cooper that none of the coastal communities up and down the east coast currently have the necessary infrastructure to support offshore drilling in the first place, according to Tom Kies, president of the Carteret County Chamber of Commerce, who was also present. Zinke plans to visit North Carolina's coast soon, too.

N.C. Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Michael Regan told New Hanover County officials on Wednesday that members of Congress who don't oppose offshore drilling are failing to listen to the communities they serve. "I believe if they spent the time I'm spending in the room with New Hanover County, Onslow County and all the counties along the coast, they'd change their mind," Regan said. "And if they don't change their mind, it's because they're not listening to the will of the people."

Regan has been touring coastal counties in recent weeks, explaining the state's reason for opposing North Carolina's inclusion in the Trump Administration's 2019-2024 offshore drilling draft plan. While the Cooper Administration and local officials are opposed to the state's inclusion, some Republican members of Congress such as Rep. David Rouzer are staunchly pro-drilling. Patricia Kusek, a New Hanover County commissioner, was the only elected Republican in the room. An anti-offshore drilling stance is, Kusek said, one of the few issues where political opponents seem to find common ground. "It's about everybody in the state, whether you're a Democrat or a Republican," Kusek said, adding drilling could affect the quality of life on the coast if allowed to move forward. (Emma Dumain, McClatchy DC and Adam Wagner, WILMINGTON STAR-NEWS, 3/07/18)

Addiction Incarcerations

People with mental health issues intersect with the criminal justice system all the time. In the past several decades, jails and prisons have become the largest de facto places for housing people with mental health disabilities in the country. As the nationwide discussion of what to do about opioid addiction continues, the North Carolina legislature established a task force to look at the problem of people with drug addiction and mental illnesses in county jails and state prisons. Because often addiction and mental health issues go hand-in-hand. The task force held its first meeting at the General Assembly on Tuesday; it was well-attended by members of the criminal justice system, including judges and district attorneys.

"A few years ago, I attended a national event about addiction and prescription drug use," Joe Prater, secretary of administration for adult corrections and juvenile justice for the state Department of Public Safety, told the committee. "At that event, I found myself as the only person from corrections in the room."

Prater went on to give the latest North Carolina prison statistics. As of February, there were 36,578 inmates in the state's 55 prison facilities, down from a peak of 40,406 in 2011. The inmate population is 92 percent male and 8 percent female. About 52 percent are black, 40 percent white and 8 percent other. The total state corrections budget is \$1.27 billion, and the average cost per inmate is about \$85 per day at minimum custody and \$114 a day at higher security facilities. North Carolina has the 13th highest total number of prisoners compared to the rest of the country with an incarceration rate is 339 inmates per 100,000 people. Twenty-nine states have higher rates of incarceration.

While 97 percent of inmates are between 20 and 55 years old, the number of older inmates has increased greatly in recent years. "That population brings with it unique health needs," Prater said. "They have three to 10 times the health costs of the younger population." Additionally, over the past decade, there has been a 60 percent increase of inmates diagnosed with chronic illnesses and a 65 percent increase of those diagnosed with a mental illness. That is 17 percent of the total prison inmate population, Prater said. And the majority of inmates with these illnesses have more than one diagnosis. (Taylor Knopf, NC HEALTH NEWS, 3/07/18)

Duke Rates

A \$13 billion electric grid upgrade would boost Duke Energy electric rates in North Carolina well beyond the 16.7 percent base rate increase the company asked state regulators to approve last year. Duke's North Carolina president testified Wednesday that this additional rider would boost rates another 1.5 percent every year, give or take, for 10 years. That adds up to an additional 16 percent increase to pay for the grid, and since businesses pay a lower rate than residential customers, residential customers would see actual impacts up to 25 percent by the end of the decade. And that's after factoring in expected savings Duke has proposed to pass along to customers from a recent cut in the federal corporate tax rate.

This "grid rider" would start relatively small, bringing in another \$36 million or so in the first year. The impact would grow quickly as Duke Energy implements changes that the company says would help the system weather storms, allow solar installations to feed electricity back into the grid, protect against cybersecurity attacks and give customers more real-time information about their energy usage. Some of this cost would be baked into the monthly amount that customers pay before they use any electricity. "A real burden on low-income households," said David Neal, an attorney for the Southern Environmental Law Center and several other groups that are pushing back against the charge.

The rider is part of a rate case now before the North Carolina Utilities Commission, an appointed regulatory body that decides how much Duke and other monopoly utilities can charge their customers and how much profit they're allowed to make. Duke officials say the grid upgrades are needed modernizations. Opponents argue that they're a company effort to boost profits since Duke is allowed to make about a 10 percent return on new construction. This is a key to the company's revenue strategy, attorneys argued before the commission Wednesday. Duke reported more than \$3

billion in profit last year, and its most recent earnings report pitched shareholders an expected 4 to 6 percent dividend growth and an 8 to 10 percent total shareholder return.

The rider is in addition to the \$600 million in new annual revenue Duke has requested for various other changes, including an ongoing shift from coal-fired power to natural gas and costs associated with cleaning up coal ash pits outside the older facilities. That \$600 million figure, which would translate to a 16.7 percent rate increase for residential customers, has since come down some through negotiations with the Public Staff, which represents ratepayers in cases before the Utilities Commission. (Travis Fain, WRAL NEWS, 3/07/18)

River Management

A federal appeals court has denied Duke Energy's bid for a longer federal license to manage the Catawba River, the source of energy, water and recreation for the Charlotte region. The federal license lets Duke control 225 miles of the Catawba with a series of dams and reservoirs. It gives the company authority to manage lake levels, release water downstream and decide whether piers may be built. Duke's initial license expired in 2006. It asked for a 50-year renewal, the maximum federal law allows. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission instead granted a 40-year term in 2015.

Duke appealed that decision, arguing that FERC had granted longer licenses to other utilities with similar hydro projects. The federal agency bases license length on the degree of development, new construction or environmental protection measures it requires. Duke argued that it had spent \$54 million on new construction it had agreed to in negotiating proposed terms of the license, and another \$111 million in costs of pursuing the Catawba license. FERC disagreed in 2016, writing that "the nature and extent of these measures are not unusual for a large-sized project like the (Catawba project), and are similar to those required in other recent licenses that received 40-year terms." The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia on Tuesday denied Duke's petition for review of the FERC decision. (Bruce Henderson, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 3/07/18)

GenX Production

Wilmington and New Hanover County officials are asking that the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) shut down operations that result in the production of chemicals like GenX, which have been discharged into the Cape Fear River and discovered in Wilmington-area drinking water systems. On Tuesday night, the Wilmington City Council adopted a resolution mirroring actions taken by the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority (CFPUA) and New Hanover County Commissioners to "request that NCDEQ immediately require all tenants of the Fayetteville Works site to cease operations that result in the production of fluorochemical compounds, due to their inability to operate without discharging fluorochemical compounds into the Cape Fear River."

The resolutions came in a wave starting last month after the latest in a series of violations issued by DEQ against the company, which is located about 100 miles upstream of Wilmington on the Bladen-Cumberland county line. "Chemours has had multiple opportunities to control sources of the compounds, but has shown an inability to do so. With this resolution, CFPUA is simply asking the State to enforce what it has stated many times -- that these compounds do not belong in the Cape Fear River," CFPUA Executive Director Jim Flechtner said in a statement Wednesday. (Tim Buckland, WILMINGTON STAR-NEWS, 3/07/18)

N.C. Utilities

Coal was responsible for about 60 percent of North Carolina's energy generation in 2006, a number that declined to under 30 percent as of 2016, the most recent full year for which the federal Energy Information Administration (EIA) has reported data. "Largely, the price of natural gas falling has been the largest catalyst," said Harrison Fell, an energy economist at N.C. State University, who along with colleague Dan Kaffine studied the change while researching an upcoming American Economic Journal paper titled "The Fall of Coal."

In December 2006, natural gas sold for \$6.73 per million British thermal units, rising to a peak of

\$12.69 in June 2008 before dropping about 75 percent during the next year, with prices largely remaining in the \$2 and \$3 range for the past nine years, according to the EIA. The shift has disrupted the energy landscape, with utilities deciding to turn away from coal toward natural gas even as environmental organizations and researchers begin to question whether its greenhouse gas impacts could be as bad as or worse than coal's.

Michael Regan, the secretary of the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality said his department advocates for both renewable energy and energy efficiency. While natural gas is part of an existing suite of energy options, Regan said, the target is a zero-emissions energy source. "We're not there today. We've got to get there," Regan said. "And so what we have to do is look at the economics, the technologies that are available, and think about, 'How do you best move from Point A to Point B?' How does the state transition to a 100 percent clean energy economy while keeping North Carolina competitive?"

While North Carolina has the second-most installed solar capacity in the country, the facilities accounted for about 3.4 million of 130.8 million megawatt hours generated in 2016. Under HB 589, approved last year, Duke Energy will add about 3,000 megawatts of solar capacity in North Carolina during roughly the next four years. Still, Fell said, "We talk a lot about solar, and you can almost pick a popular press article and think we're just days away from all of our power being solar and wind, and we're just not there."

"One-third of the country's carbon dioxide emissions come from the energy sector, and coal is the primary cause -- making it a natural target. We take a long-term view on carbon emissions and continue to believe we will need to drive carbon out of our system," Heather Danenhower, a Duke spokeswoman, wrote in an email. Duke is, Danenhower added, required to operate in the most cost-effective manner, meaning the low prices of natural gas pose the best option for the company's investments. (Adam Wagner, WILMINGTON STAR-NEWS, 3/07/18)

Toll Lanes

Commuters into North Carolina's largest metropolitan region may face tough choices when toll lanes open on Interstate 77 later this year, but there's still a chance that will never happen. State and local politicians are at least giving lip service to options other than opening the politically unpopular toll lanes as planned, though a lack of transparency has made the situation difficult to observe. Whether any of the processes now in motion will amount to more than talk also remains to be seen.

Construction on the \$650 million I-77 toll project is scheduled to end later in 2018. However, there's still a chance that drivers won't ever have to pay a toll to travel that 26-mile stretch of interstate. Public opposition to the project once it got underway was swift and loud, with many calling for the state to simply widen Interstate 77 using public funding, rather than maintaining the 50-year public-private partnership between the state and I-77 Mobility Partners, the private construction firm leading the project that is a subsidiary of the Spanish company Cintra.

Several years after the state and Cintra signed a contract, NCDOT hired a consultant, Mercator Advisers, to review the entire project and present options for alternatives to the toll lanes. The options in Mercator's report, released in September 2017 to the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization -- the metropolitan planning organization for Mecklenburg County, Iredell County and Union County -- have been under consideration by the state and a local advisory group ever since. Mercator said in its report that the contract between the state and I-77 Mobility Partners is "reasonable" but that "inconsistent public engagement has undermined confidence" in the project. The report said the North Carolina Department of Transportation erred in not being transparent about important aspects of the process of entering the public-private partnership, responding to public concerns about the project and explaining the rationale behind choosing express lanes as an option for Interstate 77.

One big question for consumers is how much the tolls will actually cost -- information that I-77 Mobility Partners and the state have so far refused to release to the public. I-77 Mobility Partners

says on its website that toll rates will be released before the lanes are opened, and after "several public meetings will occur to discuss toll rates and how to use the toll lanes prior to the first day of operations."

The toll project was, and remains, politically toxic for some elected officials who supported it. Former Gov. Pat McCrory, a Republican, narrowly lost re-election to Democrat Roy Cooper in 2016. According to some analysts, McCrory polled poorly in the northern Mecklenburg County districts that he won handily in 2012. Cooper beat McCrory by 10,000 votes. North Mecklenburg and South Iredell conservative voters who didn't support McCrory because of the toll issue, despite voting heavily for other Republicans such as Donald Trump, may have swung the election in Cooper's favor. Efforts in the legislature to cancel the project hit a wall in the state Senate. House Bill 954, filed in April 2016, passed the House 81-27, only to stall in the Senate transportation committee.

In late 2017, Gov. Cooper formed the I-77 Express Lanes Local Advisory Group to solicit input and recommendations from local politicians, business leaders and citizens about the future of the toll lanes project. That group has met three times and has two more meetings scheduled for later in March. (Michael Gebelein, CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS, 3/07/18)

Political Footwear

You're meeting with a mayor or a senator in his office. The chat is going well. Then, as he crosses his legs, you notice something unusual. The guy isn't wearing socks. "You can tell people are completely sidetracked," said Sen. Michael Lee, R-New Hanover. "They're like, 'Did he forget to wear his socks? Did he forget to pack socks? Doesn't he realize it's cold outside?'"

Lee, who almost never wears a barrier between his shoes and his bare feet, isn't alone. A host of local, state and national politicians representing the region rarely, if ever, wear socks. The preference extends to the U.S. Senate, where U.S. Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., is well known for bare feet in his loafers. "I have an aversion to" wearing socks, the state's senior senator said in a phone call last week. "It was the way I grew up. And it really doesn't matter if it's summer or winter." Burr said he has evolved, though, and now wears socks "on most Tuesdays and Wednesdays and for church on Sundays."

Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo said Burr was his inspiration for never wearing socks, even at official functions. He said he saw Burr at a session of the Senate wearing loafers and no socks. "If it's good enough for a U.S. senator, it's good enough for a small-town mayor like me," Saffo said.

State Rep. Frank Iler, R-Brunswick, is similar. He wears socks while wearing a suit or while engaging in athletic activity, but eschews them if wearing shorts or khakis in warmer weather. "My generation started the 'no socks' trend with Bass Weejuns (loafers) in high school in the late 50s," Iler said.

N.C. Reps. Deb Butler, D-New Hanover, and Holly Grange, R-New Hanover, each said they wear hosiery or socks while in the Legislature or wearing business attire. "Always" is how often N.C. Sen. Bill Rabon, R-Brunswick, and N.C. Rep. Bob Muller, R-Pender, each said they wear socks. (Tim Buckland, WILMINGTON STAR-NEWS, 3/07/18)

Moore Challenger

His family and supporters joined David Brinkley, owner of Brinkley Properties of Kings Mountain, as he filed last Tuesday afternoon at the Board of Elections to challenge five-term Republican Rep. Tim Moore for N. C. House Seat 111 in the November election. Moore, a Kings Mountain lawyer, is serving a second term as N.C. House Speaker. Brinkley, in a filing speech, said his reason for running for the House seat is because he is concerned with "the divisiveness in our legislature and voter suppression which is not the American way." He said there are many issues that need to be addressed, including teacher and law enforcement salaries.

"In Raleigh they reported the average teacher pay is \$51,000. I challenge you to find educators in

Cleveland County District 111 that are averaging \$51,000. The law enforcement officers' pay is even worse. It is time we started concentrating on paying the people that are educating our children and grandchildren and protecting our lives. Their responsibilities seem to grow more every year with no pay increases. They claim pay increases in Raleigh, but they fail to tell you about additional health insurance and other insurance premiums having to contribute to the pension plan and averaging their longevity to count as a pay raise. The \$51,000 average salary is a result of supplements from large school systems across the state. They should talk about base salaries in each district. It isn't about the gross pay, it is the net pay. What are they taking home? We are in the bottom portion in pay in the U.S. for these occupations. I respect our educators and law enforcement officers and will fight for them," Brinkley said. (KINGS MOUNTAIN HERALD, 3/06/18)

Psych Center

By the time police arrived, the south Charlotte psychiatric hospital had descended into chaos. Patients at Strategic Behavioral Center -- some wielding wooden boards -- attacked one worker, barricaded themselves in a room and escaped through a broken window. Others fought with each other or vandalized the building. Amid the mayhem, some hospital staff watched in fear and did not try to control the situation. They initially delayed calling for help because a former executive had erroneously told them to not call the police for trouble with patients. "I was afraid for my life," one worker told state investigators.

Newly released state documents reveal previously undisclosed details about New Year's Day when 10 children, as young as age 12, broke out of the hospital and went missing for at least two hours. The report portrays overwhelmed staffers at the 60-bed facility on Sharon Road West near South Boulevard struggling to supervise the children in their care. They told investigators the hospital was severely short-staffed, some workers were afraid of patients and that five employees had been recently terminated. Hospital administrators met with staffers to discuss concerns, but the facility was "not any safer because nothing had changed," one employee said, according to the report dated Jan. 17.

Strategic is one of 37 licensed psychiatric residential treatment facilities in North Carolina where patients get round-the-clock care for severe mental and behavioral conditions. It is owned by a Tennessee company that owns mental treatment centers in six states, including three in North Carolina. (Fred Clasen-Kelly and Cassie Cope, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 3/07/18)

Asheville Beating

An FBI investigation is underway into an Asheville police beating of a resident stemming from a jaywalking confrontation, according to officials with the state's top law enforcement agency. The federal investigation will likely center around a potential civil rights violation of Johnnie Rush who was beaten, stunned and choked by Asheville Police Department officer Chris Hicks after Rush was stopped the night of Aug. 24 for allegedly jaywalking and trespassing through the parking lot of a business that was closed for the night. The news came in a statement from the State Bureau of Investigation to the Citizen-Times Wednesday night.

SBI spokeswoman Patty McQuillan was responding on behalf of Director Bob Schurmeier to a question about Schurmeier's recent discussions with District Attorney Todd Williams. Williams wanted the SBI to take over the Asheville Police Department's investigation of the incident. In the statement McQuillan said, "The SBI has been requested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to assist them with a criminal investigation. The SBI director has discussed this with the district attorney and has declined to open a separate state investigation at this time." (Joel Burgess, ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES, 3/07/18)

Rape Kits

A man identified by police as a registered sex offender now faces charges of raping two teenagers more than 20 years ago, based on evidence obtained through DNA testing of old sexual assault kits. Charlotte-Mecklenburg police said at a news conference Wednesday that Warren Lee Caldwell, 56,

was arrested March 1 and jailed in connection with the rape of an 18-year-old in 1990 and of a 17-year-old in 1994. The department received two grants to pay for the testing of old sexual assault kits, said Sgt. Darrell Price, head of the sexual assault cold case unit. The department submitted 885 cases to a lab through one grant and 300 to another lab through a second grant, he said. The arrest was announced the week after state Attorney General Josh Stein said an audit of law enforcement agencies across the state showed North Carolina has more than 15,000 untested rape kits. That audit showed Charlotte-Mecklenburg with 499 untested rape kits.

That inventory of more than 15,000 untested rape kits isn't just demanding the attention of state lawmakers and officials -- it is also among the highest in the country. It's unclear exactly where North Carolina ranks among states in the number of untested kits because there's no national standard for how often states should conduct an inventory. Some states haven't done a review at all. But according to End the Backlog, a program operated by the nonprofit Joyful Heart Foundation, North Carolina has the highest reported number of untested rape kits in its current inventory. The group tracks the backlog of rape kits in every state where the data is available.

It's not the highest backlog in history, as some states have counted and then tested their inventories. Texas reported having 20,000 untested rape kits in 2011, but the majority of those have been tested since, according to End the Backlog's website. California and Florida currently are reported as having more than 13,000 untested kits. (Martha Waggoner, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS and Danielle Chemtob, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 3/07/18)

TIGER Grant

Senators Thom Tillis and Richard Burr announced the North Carolina Department of Transportation will receive a \$19.9 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant for Raleigh, NC in a press release Wednesday. The project eliminates a railroad crossing by lowering the Blue Ridge Road from its current ground level to instead pass under the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR). It also reconfigures existing nearby intersections and adjacent access roadways. "I want to thank Secretary Chao and the Department of Transportation for awarding Raleigh this substantial grant through the competitive TIGER program," said Senator Tillis. "This grant will go a long way to ensure North Carolina's citizens are safe while ensuring the North Carolina Railroad can travel efficiently." (NEWS RELEASE, 3/07/18)

Running

Democratic candidate Dr. Lewie Phillips has filed to run for N.C. House of Representatives District 81. Phillips is a science teacher at Lexington High School and a past member of the Lexington City Council. "I am pleased and honored to announce my candidacy for House District 81," Phillips said in a news release. "During my term on the Lexington City Council, I gained an understanding of the complexities of government including its capabilities and limitations. As a school teacher in the public education system, I see the changing faces of our school children. Our community and school districts are emblematic of our country's evolving demographic makeup." Phillips said that to heighten the viability and economic potential of the region, leadership must face the real challenges of diversity with a logical vision that combines a healthy work ethic and an intellectual curiosity and pathways to employment. (THE (Lexington) DISPATCH, 3/07/18)

School Security

On Tuesday, Rep. Mark Meadows, R-NC, introduced two bills to provide resources for enhancing school security and keeping students safe. The first, the Protect America's Schools Act, would provide \$1.5 billion in supplemental appropriations to the Community Oriented Policing Services' School Resource Officer program. The second, the Veterans Securing Schools Act, would allow veterans hired by a state or local agency to serve as school resource officers. This bill gives state and local law enforcement agencies greater flexibility in hiring veterans to protect school campuses.

These two bills are the direct results of input from sheriffs and law enforcement officers across Western North Carolina, Meadows said. "Our country is in the midst of a defining moment where we

have an opportunity to come together and develop common sense solutions to safeguard our children in school," he said in a statement. "While gun control is not the answer, the best and most effective path forward, I believe, is one that safeguards our schools from becoming 'soft targets,' or areas with little to stand in the way of someone with bad intentions." (THE (Hendersonville) TIMES-NEWS, 3/06/18)

Class Size

The school board's decision to cut class size outside the scope of state legislation is unwise, ill-fated and costly, and should be rescinded when the school board next meets, Wayne County Commissioner Joe Daughtery said during the commissioners' Tuesday morning session. Daughtery and Commissioners Joe Gurley and Bill Pate also expressed offense at insinuations by school board member Raymond Smith that commissioners have failed to fund schools.

On Feb. 26, the school board voted 5-2 to implement the class size restrictions originally mandated by the General Assembly in House Bill 90 -- a maximum of 18 students per class in kindergarten, 16 in first grade, and 17 in second and third grades -- at the five low-performing elementary schools by the start of the 2018-2019 school year. The motion, made by Smith, also included prioritizing those schools when placing licensed teachers. The policy will cost the Wayne County school system local dollars as well as personnel, Daughtery said. (Steve Herring, GOLDSBORO NEWS-ARGUS, 3/07/18)

Buncombe Sheriff

The Buncombe County Board of Elections at an emergency meeting Tuesday ejected an ex-con sheriff candidate from the race, per a state law the board wasn't aware of until last week. Michael Morgan, a libertarian candidate who was convicted of manslaughter in 1984, said that the board notified him Monday that he would likely be expelled from the race, for which he filed more than three weeks prior. Morgan, 64, hoped to demilitarize law enforcement, make no marijuana arrests and stop civil asset forfeiture -- all major platform points for the aspiring sheriff, whose dreams were dashed Tuesday night. He said holds nothing against the local board of elections officials, whom he assumes either forgot about the rule or didn't know about it when they took his \$1,302 filing fee. "Nobody knew about this," he said Wednesday morning. "It took us all by surprise." Buncombe County Election Services Director Trena Parker Velez said that election staff didn't know about the 2010 amendment to the N.C. Constitution barring ex-cons from the sheriff's office. (Sam DeGrave, ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES, 3/07/18)

Tourism Campaign

The state tourism industry has set its sights on attracting first-time visitors to popular North Carolina sites. Visit NC debuted its "Firsts that Last" campaign at its annual conference, which ended its three-day stay at Benton Convention Center in downtown Winston-Salem on Tuesday. The campaign launches in earnest April 2. It is focused on three key markets -- Atlanta, Nashville, Tenn., and northern Virginia/Washington -- and three rising markets -- Columbus, Ohio; Orlando, Fla.; and Philadelphia. Wit Terrell, Visit NC's executive director, said the goal is pitching first experiences to potential first-time visitors, whether dipping toes into the ocean, driving the Blue Ridge Parkway, flying a replica of the Wright Brothers Flyer on Jockey's Ridge, or sampling the fares along the state's barbecue trail. (Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 3/07/18)

Reynolds Bonuses

Reynolds American Inc. said Wednesday that most of its 5,500 employees will benefit from a one-time \$1,000 bonus related to the federal corporate tax rate cut. British American Tobacco Plc became the world's largest publicly traded tobacco manufacturer upon completion July 25 of its \$54.5 billion purchase of the 57.8 percent of Reynolds it did not already own. The corporate tax rate was cut from 35 percent to 21 percent in late December 2017 under the new tax law passed by Congress. The one-time bonus would represent nearly a \$4.5 million expense for BAT. Reynolds spokesman David Howard said the bonus will be paid to "all regular, full-time hourly and salaried employees of RAI and

its subsidiaries, up to and including the level of senior manager." (Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 3/07/18)

Jacksonville VA

A temporary VA clinic re-opened in Jacksonville Monday. The clinic will increase the capacity for patients and serve veterans 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Because of the large veteran population in Jacksonville, Fayetteville Veterans Affairs Medical Center interim director Dr. Mark E. Shelhorse said the number of veterans treated is growing fast. "This area has one of the highest growth rates in all of VA," Shelhorse said in a press release. "The new leased space will give us increased access capacity as well as reduce overcrowding at our Henderson Road facility that opened in January 2016 and is already reaching maximum capacity. According to Jeffery Melvin, public affairs officer for Fayetteville VA, the Brynn Marr location will be open for at least two years. (Kelsey Stiglitz, THE (Jacksonville, NC) DAILY NEWS, 3/06/18)

Theater Sale

A group representing the potential buyers of The Roanoke Rapids Theatre has confirmed the sale will be delayed. Jack Glasure, of French West Vaughan, the public relations firm representing Thomas and Evon McLean, who have entered into an agreement to purchase the venue from the city of Roanoke Rapids, said Beau Petty, son of Evon McLean, told him the group has gotten an extension on the due diligence period to April 30. Glasure said everything was still on track to finalize the purchase, but "there was just a little more work to do."

Roanoke Rapids City Council met Tuesday night, but prior to entering closed session, City Manager Joseph Scherer said he was confident everything was headed in the right direction. Monday he told The Daily Herald he was anticipating the sale still happening prior to the March 15 due diligence deadline. Petty had made the journey to the theater in December and said the group's goal in the purchase was "to help this Exit 171 become the best exit on Interstate 95." (Roger Bell, THE (Roanoke Rapids) DAILY HERALD, 3/07/18)

Aviation STEM Center

In Beaufort County, STEM education is about to take flight -- literally. On January 30, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to celebrate the opening of a new STEM center with a focus on aviation at a location right by the Washington-Warren Airport property. The ground was broken for the 6,000 square foot building in September 2016 but has experienced delays due to weather incidents like Hurricane Matthew and soil issues. The space will be dedicated to exposing 11-to-15-year-old students to aviation science, technology and boating, as well as a fitness component, said Alvin Powell, president of the Beaufort County Police Activities League. "We will work on a holistic approach, where we expose kids to science and aviation and boating, but also expose them to life skills and being physically fit," Powell said. Powell said there will be unique equipment inside the building, purchased with funding from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund and the NCDOT aviation division, including an aircraft simulator, wind tunnels and 3D printers to demonstrate the hands-on components of science. (Sara Watson, EDUCATION NC, 3/07/18)

Mattamuskeet Plan

Agencies and organizations are asking for public input on a plan to improve conditions in the Lake Mattamuskeet watershed. Water quality in the lake in Hyde County is declining and lake levels are changing. County officials, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are working together to support the development of a watershed-restoration plan and seeking public input on related issues. When completed, the watershed management plan will explain how the lake should and does function, assess its status and health and identify various options to address water quality and flooding issues. (COASTAL REVIEW ONLINE, 3/07/18)

Legislative Studies and Meetings

Items in **RED** are new listings.

LB: Legislative Building

LOB: Legislative Office Building.

More Information: <http://ncleg.net/LegislativeCalendar/>

Thursday, March 8

- 9 a.m. | The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Information Technology, 544 LOB.
- 9 a.m. | The Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee, 643 LOB.
- 1 p.m. | The Joint Legislative Economic Development and Global Engagement Oversight Committee, 643 LOB.

Tuesday March 13

- 9 a.m. | The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, 643 LOB.
- 1 p.m. | The Joint Legislative Study Committee on the Division of Local School Administrative Units (2017), 544 LOB.
- 1 p.m. | The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid and NC Health Choice, 643 LOB.
- 1 p.m. | The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, Pine Knoll Shores Aquarium.

Thursday, March 15

- 9 a.m. | The Joint Legislative Emergency Management Oversight Committee, 544 LOB.
- 9:30 a.m. | The Committee on Access to Healthcare in Rural North Carolina (LRC)(2017), Columbus Regional Healthcare System.
- 10 a.m. | The Committee on Private Process Servers (LRC)(2017), 423 LOB.
- 1 p.m. | The Joint Legislative Task Force on Education Finance Reform (2017), 544 LOB.
- **1 p.m. | The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety, 643 LOB.**

Monday, March 19

- 2 p.m. | House Select Committee on Disaster Relief, 544 LOB.

Wednesday, March 21

- **9 a.m. | House Select Committee on School Safety, 643 LOB.**

Thursday, March 22

- **9:30 a.m. | House Select Committee on North Carolina River Quality, 643 LOB.**

Monday, March 26

- 10 a.m. | The Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee, 544 LOB.

Wednesday, March 28

- 12 p.m. | The Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (LRC)(2017), 544 LOB.
- 1 p.m. | House Select Committee on Implementation of Building Code Regulatory Reform, 1228/1327 LB.

N.C. Government Meetings and Hearings

Items in **RED** are new listings.

Thursday, March 8

- 9:30 a.m. | The UNC System University Funding Model Task Force, Board Room of the UNC Center for School Leadership Development, 140 Friday Center Dr., Chapel Hill.
- 1 p.m. | The UNC System Task Force on the Size, Scope, and Purpose meets, Board Room of the UNC Center for School Leadership Development, Chapel Hill.
- 2:30 p.m. | The UNC System Committee on Audit, Risk Management, and Compliance meets, Room 128 of the UNC Center for School Leadership Development, Chapel Hill.
- 6:30 p.m. | The Board of Dental Examiners holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, 2000 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 160, Morrisville.

Friday, March 9

- 1 p.m. | The State Board of Proprietary Schools meets, North Carolina Community College System Office, 200 W. Jones St., Raleigh.

Tuesday, March 13

- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Building Code Council holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, Albemarle Building, 325 North Salisbury St., Raleigh.
- 12:30 p.m. | The N.C. Pesticide Board meets, Gov. James Martin Building, NC State Fairgrounds, Raleigh.
- 6 p.m. | The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries will hold a public hearing on proposed shellfish leases in Carteret County, N.C Division of Marine Fisheries' Central District Office, 5285 Highway 70 West, Morehead City.

Thursday, March 15

- 10 a.m. | The Rules Review Commission meets, 1711 New Hope Church Rd., Raleigh.

Monday, March 19

- 11 a.m. | The Board of Occupational Therapy holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, Wells Fargo Capital Center, 13th Floor Conference Room, 150 Fayetteville St., Raleigh.

Tuesday, March 20

- 8:30 a.m. | The Fund Development and Communications Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets via conference call. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, 919-821-9573.
- 10 a.m. | The Board of Directors Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh.

Wednesday, March 21

- **6 p.m. | The Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Advisory Committee meets, N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Washington regional office, 943 Washington Square Mall, Washington.**

Friday, April 6

- 10:30 a.m. | The state Division of Employment Security holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Employment Security, Room A-502, 700 Wade Ave., Raleigh.

Wednesday, April 18

- 10 a.m. | The NC Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission meets, 400 East Tryon Road, Raleigh.

Tuesday, April 24

- 9 a.m. | The state Appraisal Board holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, North Carolina Appraisal Board, 5830 Six Forks Road, Raleigh.

UNC Board of Governors

Board Room of the UNC Center for School Leadership Development
140 Friday Center Drive, Chapel Hill (**remote meeting locations in RED**)
More Information: <https://www.northcarolina.edu/bog/schedule.php>

Friday, March 23

- TBA | UNC Wilmington, Wilmington.

Friday, May 25

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

N.C. Utilities Commission Hearing Schedule

Dobbs Building
430 North Salisbury Street
Raleigh, North Carolina
More Information: <http://www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us/activities/activit.htm>

Monday, March 12

- Staff Conference
- 1 p.m. | E-2 Sub 1149 ...Complaint of Fresh Air XXIV, LLC, Fresh Air XXIII LLC and Fresh Air XXXVIII, LLC, Dobbs - Commission Hearing Room, 2nd floor, Room 2115.

Monday, March 19

- Staff Conference

Monday, March 26

- Staff Conference

Other Meetings and Events of Interest

Items in **RED** are new listings.

Thursday, March 8

- 9 a.m. | NC Aquaculture Development Conference, 203 S. Front St., New Bern.

Monday, March 12

- 1 p.m. | NC Local Catch Summit, Southport Community Building, 223 East Bay St., Southport.

Wednesday, March 14

- 7:30 a.m. | NC Water Resources Research Institute (UNC System) Annual Conference, Jane S. McKimmon Center, 1101 Gorman St., Raleigh.

Monday, March 19

- TBD | The N.C. Chamber hold annual meeting, Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley, 4500 Marriott Dr, Raleigh.

Monday, June 11

- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor begins, local county Board of Elections.

Monday, June 18

- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for all Judicial Offices begins, N.C. State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement, 430 N Salisbury St, Raleigh.

Friday, June 29

- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for all Judicial Offices ends, N.C. State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement, 430 N Salisbury St, Raleigh.

Friday, July 6

- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor ends, local county Board of Elections.

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